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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— The council of the Entomological Society of London are authorized by Lord Walsingham and other gentlemen interested in the diseases of British game-birds, to offer to public competition the following prizes: £50 for the best and most complete life-history of *Sclerostoma syngamus* Dies., supposed to produce the so called "gapes" in poultry, game, and other birds; £50 for the best and most complete life-history of *Strongylus pergracilis* Cob., supposed to cause the grouse disease. No life-history will be considered satisfactory unless the different stages of development are observed and recorded. The competition is open to naturalists of all nationalities. The same observer may compete for both prizes. Essays in English, French, or German to be sent in on or before October 15, 1882, addressed to the secretary of the society, 11 Chandos street, Cavendish Square.

— At the Sheffield meeting of the British Association, Dr. Crichton Browne delivered an address on influence of domestication on brain growth. He had found by experiments that domestication had greatly reduced the brains of the duck, and he argued that men, like ducks, might be fed and housed, fenced about, and exempted from participation in the life struggle until, like the ducks, they would depreciate in mental capacity. Their bodies might increase in size and succulence, but their brains would become straitened and withered. Disease and luxury crippled the brains. It was as true as ever that men were perfected through suffering, toil and conflict, and it was not through affluence and comfort that genuine civilization was attained. It was the civilization, not merely the domestication of mankind, that must be aimed at.

— Next to the name of Dr. T. W. Harris that of Dr. Asa Fitch will be held in especial remembrance for his valuable and numerous contributions to economical entomology. For many years before his death, which occurred April 8th last, at the age of seventy, he ceased to correspond with American entomologists, and to those of the present generation he was almost entirely unknown. A biographical sketch with a likeness, by E. P. Thurston, appears in the *Popular Science Monthly* for November.

— W. W. Saunders, who died Sept. 13th, was one of the leading English promoters of botany and entomology, being unequaled as a patron of natural science. He will be remembered by his Insecta Saundersiana and Refugium Botanicum, and a number of papers on entomology, botany and horticulture.

— We have neglected to record the death, in April last, of Dr. Hermann Loew, who has been so voluminous and painstaking a a writer on Dipterous insects, and has described and monographed so many American flies, chiefly in the publications of the Smithsonian Institution. His collections are in the Cambridge Museum.

— Prof. Cope has recently returned from an extended trip to the Pacific coast. Going and returning he made excursions into Colorado to the fields explored by him in 1873, and to the Jurassic beds of the Rocky mountains which have yielded the remains of the most gigantic of land vertebrata, the *Opisthocœla.* Desirous of ascertaining whether, after an interval of six years, a once productive locality would yield a new crop of fossils to the process of atmospheric erosion, he made an exploration of a part of the plains in the eastern section of the State. The region has been twice overrun and depopulated by the Cheyenne Indians since his expedition of 1873, hence a short stay was thought to be sufficient to accomplish the objects in view. On going over the ground, the topography showed moderate results of erosion. This had been sufficient to expose a great many fossils, several of them nearly complete skeletons. Such were found of species of *Hypertragulus, Poëbrotherium, Oreodon, Hoplophoneus;* there were also numerous jaws of *Temnocyon, Amphicyon, Dinictis, Mesodectes*, and many Rodentia. After a further successful search in the Loup Fork horizon, which yielded, among other things, *Pseudælurus intrepidus*, the outfit returned. The weather was cold; bread had to be cut with a hatchet, and water thawed out by the fire.

At the Jurassic beds, measures were taken for the further exhumation of *Camarasaurus.* Some fine specimens of a carnivorous Dinosaur of the genus *Hypsirophus* were obtained, and the greater part of the skeleton of *Amphicœlias altus* was secured.

Prof. Cope visited the Lower Miocene beds of the John Day region of Oregon, the scene of many recent explorations. His party had had excellent success, and had nearly exhausted the locality. Among other interesting specimens, they had obtained crania of five species of *Felidæ*, one of them a true *Machærodus, M. strigidens* Cope, of small size; and others of older type and larger size, which are described below. The skull of the *Hoplophoneus platycopis* was observed by the members of the party (under J. L. Wortman) perched on a pinnacle of an almost inaccessible precipice, and several fruitless attempts to reach it were made. At length Leander Davis, an experienced collector, secured the prize, which is, so far as known, unique in Prof. Cope's collection.

The most remarkable species of fossil cat is the *Archælurus debilis* Cope, gen. et sp. nov. Generic characters: Dentition, I. $\frac{3}{3}$, C. $\frac{1}{1}$, Pre-m. $\frac{4}{3}$, M. $\frac{1}{2}$; mandible with the anterior face of the symphysis separated from the lateral face by an angle which is not produced downwards. Superior sectorial without anterior lobe; inferior sectorial with heel. The characters place *Archælurus* at the base of the *Felidæ*, showing that it is the most generalized form yet known, and about equally related to the feline and Machærodont series. Char. specif.: General structure of the jaws, weak; superior canine, small, little compressed, with an acute posterior edge which is not serrulate; first premolar in each jaw, one rooted; second inferior premolar, large; sectorials large; diastemata very short; alveolar border below the inferior sectorial and tubercular teeth everted, forming a large osseous callus which has a free inferior and posterior margin, the latter rising into the base of the coronoid processes; zygomata slender; postorbital processes little prominent; front, wide, convex transversely. Length of cranium, m. .200; superciliary width, .052; zygomatic width, .124; length from orbit to superior incisors, .066; length of superior sectorial, .023; do of inferior molar series, .064; diameter of superior canine, .012. About the size of the panther, or of the *Nimravus brachyops*.

Hoplophoneus platycopis Cope, sp. nov. This is the largest sabre-tooth discovered in North America. It is twice the bulk of the *H. primævus* Leidy, and differs from that species and the *H. occidentalis* in the relatively large size of the premolar teeth, which are less obliquely placed than in the latter. The first superior premolar is very small; the canine is large and compressed as in the species of *Machærodus*, and has serrulate posterior and anterior cutting edges. Inferior incisors with conic crowns. The symphysis is very deep in consequence of the large development of the inferior flares for the canines. Sagittal crest making a very steep angle with the front. Total length of cranium, m. .280; zygomatic width, .192; length from orbit to superior incisors, .095; length of superior sectorial, .025; of inferior do, .022; do of inferior molar series, .055; length of crown of superior canine, .060; width of do. at base, .026. This skull is one-sixth smaller than that of the Bengal tiger (*Uncia tigris*).

— The Permanent Exhibition of Philadelphia has received a temporary set-back in consequence of the issuing of an order for the removal of its building by the Park Commissioners. This extraordinary proceeding was the work of a majority of a mere quorum of that body, who met during the summer months while the remaining members of the commission were away from the city. The action of these men reminds us of that of Judge Hilton, of the New York Central Park, who destroyed Waterhouse Hawkins' restorations of extinct animals, and razed the building that was to contain them. The press of Philadelphia have unanimously condemned the commission, and demanded the continuance of the exposition.

— Thos. G. Gentry is engaged on a work on the fertilization of plants by insects, based on observations made in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

— Prof. D. S. Jordan is preparing a work on the fishes of North America.

— Prof. O. B. Johnson, of Salem, Oregon, can furnish well prepared specimens of the fauna of Oregon at reasonable rates.